THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT

An Ordination,

HELD AT OOTACAMUND ON TRINITY SUNDAY,

JUNE 15TH, 1851.

BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF MADRAS.

BY

THE REV. R. CALDWELL, B. A.

MISSIONARY OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS AT EDEYENGOODY, TINNEVELLY.

Published at the request of His Lordship the Bishop, and the Clergy who were present.

MADRAS:

PRINTED BY REUBEN TWIGG, AT THE CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY'S PRESS, VEPERY.

1851.

A SERMON.

EPHESIANS III. 8.

"*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles* THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST."

THESE words exhibit, first, the subject matter, or theme, of St. Paul's preaching,—"*the unsearchable riches of Christ;*" secondly, his estimate of the privilege of being appointed to make known these riches to those who had not yet heard of them,—"*Unto me is this grace given that I should preach* the unsearchable riches of Christ *among the Gentiles;*" and thirdly, his deep, overwhelming sense of his unworthiness to fulfil so momentous a task,—"Unto me, *who am less than the least of all saints,* is this grace given."

On the present occasion I wish to direct your attention to the first of these particulars alone,—the theme of the Apostle's preaching—the theme which they who are now to be ordained, and all who have already 'obtained part in this Ministry,' are to consider it their duty and their privilege to preach,—whether to Congregations of professing Christians, or "among the Gentiles."

The theme of our preaching is to be "THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST."

In discoursing on this theme I trust that the proofs of Christ's unsearchable riches which may be adduced will have the effect of "stirring up the minds" of those who are this day to be ordained "by way of remembrance,"—"though they know them and be established in the present truth;"

but it is my chief object and wish to improve this solemn occasion to the spiritual advantage of the large congregation now assembled,—so to set forth the theme we are to preach and you and we are to believe that all here present may be convinced of the unsearchable riches of Christ, or induced to avail themselves of those riches more largely than they have yet done. If the unsearchable riches of Christ are to be the theme of *our* preaching, they are also to be the object of *your* faith, the subject of *your* meditations, the theme of *your* rejoicing; and may God grant that all who are assembled here this day may be enabled both to understand wherein these riches of Christ consist and to appropriate them by faith to their own eternal enrichment!

In preaching "among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" we preach First, the riches of His atoning merits; Secondly, the riches of His pardoning mercy; and Thirdly, the riches of His transforming grace.

We preach

FIRST, THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST'S ATONING MERITS.

"Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich;" and we are made rich by His poverty when we participate in the inexhaustible atoning efficacy of His "obedience unto death."

Many who are "ignorant of God's righteousness," and "go about to establish their own" confidently hope that their repentance, their self-denial, and their charity to the poor will make amends for their offences: but the poverty of men's own merits—the unreality of their visions of self-acquired spiritual wealth, will be made manifest by the scrutiny of the great day. It shall be as when a beggar dreams and he fancies he is "rich and increased in goods," but he awakes and the proofs of his poverty stare him in the face.

The sacrifice of Christ was expiatory and meritorious for two reasons;

FIRST, *as being a voluntary sacrifice, not required by any rule of duty.* Men are incapable of doing anything that is strictly speaking meritorious, because they are incapable of doing more than they are required to do, or doing anything in a better manner than is required. When they have done all they can, even if what they do were unmixed with sin, they have done only that which it was their duty to do, and which cannot atone for former violations of duty. At the best they are "unprofitable servants." But Christ's "obedience unto death" possesses real expiatory merit—real riches of righteousness, as being rendered of His own free choice and not required of Him by any rule of duty exterior to Himself,—as being an obedience prompted by His own infinite mercy alone and offered to God as a sacrifice for the disobedience of others. It was not His duty, in virtue of a command or an obligation, to assume our nature, to appear "in the form of a servant," to be made subject to the law, to "endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself," or to make "His soul an offering for sin."

"No man took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself." Consequently His sufferings *merited* the reward He sought to obtain. His voluntary humiliation purchased for us a treasure of atoning merit.

But the sufferings of Christ were meritorious and expiatory not only as being voluntarily endured, but IN THE SECOND PLACE, *and chiefly, as being the sufferings of a divine person.*

"No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him:" but "who shall by searching find out" the limits of the saving power of "God manifest in the flesh?"

To become our surety and suffer as our substitute it was necessary that the Mediator between God and us should assume our nature—that "a body" should be "prepared for Him;" but the efficacy and value of all His actions flowed from His eternal divinity. God the Son added the poverty of manhood to "the riches of the glory" of His godhead. With His divine, infinite self-consciousness He intertwined the

nature, and feelings, and limited self-consciousness of humanity; and in consequence of that mysterious assumption of humanity into personal union with Deity, every action of Christ's manhood was an action of "GOD manifest in the flesh." Hence, when He stooped to obey the law and fulfil its righteousness "in the likeness of our sinful flesh,"—to be made "a curse" and to bear the cross in expiation of the guilt of our offences, every act He performed and every suffering He endured in His human nature on our account was infinitely efficacious and meritorious, because performed or endured by Him who was truly divine.

What a store of "unsearchable riches" opens to our view in the truth that Christ, being divine, is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto the Father by Him!" His interposition on our behalf is "the power of GOD unto salvation." All man's works betray the poverty of their origin either in their design or in their execution, but the works of God are divinely perfect. Let us now therefore "stand still" and scan "*the salvation of* GOD." Let us consider and admire the abounding efficacy—the inexhaustible, overflowing virtue of the atonement offered for us by God's own immortal word.

The atoning merits of Christ may be described as inexhaustibly abundant—as "unsearchable riches," for three reasons.

Such are the riches of His merits that, FIRST, *His "obedience unto death" is not only "a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction" to divine justice, but is a satisfaction of superabundant sufficiency.* It not only vindicates God's outraged law, but "establishes" and glorifies it. It not only renders it possible for God to "justify the ungodly" without detriment to His justice, but makes the highest display of His justice consist in His forgiveness of our sins for Christ's sake. When sinners are punished in their own persons, the honor of God's law is vindicated; but never was that law so "magnified and made honourable,"—never were its sanctions so impressively or awfully confirmed, as when "God spared not His own son," but laid on Him the penalties of His broken law, and thereby

"declared His righteousness," as well as His mercy, in sparing us. In our redemption by the cross and passion of Christ it appears more clearly than it could by any amount of punishment inflicted upon sinners themselves, that the law is not a nullity; that "the wages" of the violation of it "is death;" that its penalties cannot be remitted without full compensation to divine justice;—that the lawgiver of the universe "loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness;" and that, whether He punishes or pardons, "the sceptre of His kingdom is a right sceptre," and the throne on which He sits "a glorious, high throne" of unspotted rectitude "for ever and ever." In the cross of Christ God manifests the inflexible severity of His justice even when He acquits the guilty—never so conspicuously as when He acquits them. The cross is therefore the richest exhibition of the harmony of God's perfections the world has ever seen. There the great deep of His compassion bursts forth in healing streams; there the sun of His love "stands still:" and yet there the lustre of His mercy scarcely appears brighter than the holy lustre of His justice and truth; and the unsearchable abyss of His condescension discloses awful and decisive proofs of His abhorrence of sin.

Such, SECONDLY, are the riches of Christ's atoning merits that *the virtue of His cross more than counterbalances the evil consequences of the fall.* "By the obedience of ONE" God is more honored than by "the disobedience of the many" He was dishonoured; and therefore "the grace of God and the gift by grace have abounded unto many." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The believer in Christ is not only pardoned, but declared righteous,—not only restored to God's favor, but endowed with a title to everlasting life,—not only sanctified, but made "the habitation of God through the Spirit." Not only is the wound healed, but the scar is obliterated. Nor that only, but a strength and a beauty unknown before are conferred. The interposition of Christ has not simply restored us to the innocence of our original state, but has raised us to a higher, a happier, and a more secure position. To

have been "made only a little lower than the angels" was the glory of primeval man; but it is the glory of redeemed men that the Lord of angels has become their brother, and that, by incorporation in His mystical body, they are "made partakers of the divine nature." Their spirits are by His spirit transformed into the image of God; and even their bodies, by union with that glorious humanity which He has carried to the right hand of power, and which continues to be the channel of mercy and grace—even their "vile bodies" have acquired by that union a new dignity and are heirs of a glorious transformation.

Thus in the second Adam we gain more than we lost in the first. We are "complete in Christ." The emptiness of the creature is exchanged for the "fulness of Him who filleth all in all." Instead of the poverty of our original state of probation, and the hopeless debt of our subsequent state of sin, we are now partakers of "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Such, IN THE THIRD PLACE are the riches of Christ's merits that *the guilt not only of some men or of many, but the guilt of all men, of all times, has been expiated by His cross.* All sins past, present, and to come were laid upon His devoted head. As the common representative and surety of the human race, He "tasted death for every man." Each soul's history passed in review before His prescient eye. He saw every one of us in our unveiled guilt and vileness: but He shrank not from the task of laying down His life for us at the sight of any blackness of enormity, or any odiousness of vice. His loving heart yearned over us all, and the arms of His "saving help" were extended wide on the cross to embrace us all. He was "lifted up" that by the sufficiency of His sacrifice, and the riches of His merits, He might "draw all men unto Him." "The foundation laid in Zion" by "God manifest in the flesh" was strong enough to bear "not only our sins, but also the sins of the whole world:" and "though the rains should descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon it," this "foundation of God standeth sure"

for ever. All that have ever entered into heaven have obtained admission through Christ's merits : and if the riches of those merits should ever become exhausted,—if a time should ever come when their own strength or virtue should be the only support of the saints in glory, heaven itself would cease to be what it is. Repose and peace would vanish from the abodes of the redeemed. But the efficacy of Christ's death is infinite and the duration of that efficacy eternal; and therefore no fear of change ever disturbs "that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The riches of Christ's atoning merits, as apparent in the three particulars now mentioned, being so unsearchably abundant, should they not, my brethren, excite us to thankfulness and praise? Should we not "count all things but loss for the excellency" of these riches? Should not every one of us say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord." In the cross is salvation : in the cross is peace. No where else shall we find the assurance of the expiation of all our sins, the certainty of reconciliation with God, the pledge and warrant of admission into the heavenly city.

Therefore to the cross let us ever come, bending under the burden of our sins,—trembling under the load of our guilt, and shame, and miseries, and fears. Hither let us bring our defilements that we may wash our souls white in this ever-flowing fountain of blood. Hither let us bring our nakedness that we may clothe ourselves with this spotless, seamless robe of righteousness. Hither let us bring our poverty that we may enrich ourselves for ever with this "fine gold, tried in the fire." "When our spirits are overwhelmed within us," at the foot of the cross let us take refuge, and kneel and gaze: and at the sight of those eyes of divine compassion, those streaming wounds, the view into that capacious heart opened by the spear, those proofs of undying love and God-like power to save, let us assure ourselves that our wants will be more than supplied out of "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

It will be the duty and privilege of those who are now to be ordained "to preach among the Gentiles" these unsearchable riches. They will not go forth as preachers of an unreal salvation by unreal merits. It will not be *their* endeavour to replace one set of broken cisterns by another—to teach salvation by the merit of Christian works instead of salvation by heathen ceremonies. "We preach Christ crucified," to the self-righteous "a stumbling block," and to the self-wise "foolishness," "but to them that are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." In preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, we preach first and most prominently the riches of Christ's atoning merits.

We preach

SECONDLY, THE RICHES OF HIS PARDONING MERCY.

The unsearchable riches of Christ consist not only in the abundance of His atoning merits, but also in the abundance of His mercy displayed in the bountiful application of those merits. By the rich efficacy of the sacrifice He offered for our sins He satisfied divine justice and reconciled God to us: but, to reconcile us to God by imparting to us pardon and peace as the fruit of His satisfaction is the crowning purpose of His love. He was "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins." The bestowal of forgiveness is not the only blessing flowing from His atonement; but it is the first, most necessary, and most prominent benefit, the ground-work of all others, and the means by which the enmity of our hearts is overcome, and our reconciliation with God actually effected: and therefore Christ's love in forgiving our sins—in speaking peace to our souls by convincing us of our acquittal and acceptance, for His sake, is mentioned in Scripture as a special part of His unsearchable riches. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of His grace." Thus the atoning merits of Christ are not, like a concealed treasure, hoarded up in unprofitable security.

They are bestowed freely on all who are willing to receive them.

We are so loth to forgive those who have offended us, and through our sins, which have "separated between us and God," we are wont to entertain such hard thoughts of Him, that it is difficult for us to appreciate the riches of His pardoning mercy in Christ. We are prone to judge of Him by ourselves, and to "limit the Holy one of Israel." We perceive, it may be, the riches of Christ's atoning merits, but are "slow of heart" to believe that they are ours. We regard them wistfully from a distance with a suspicious eye, as if we wished, but dared not, to avail ourselves of them. And even when we apply to Christ for mercy and forgiveness, we too often do so as if we thought He would forgive grudgingly and of necessity. But the riches of His mercy displayed in the free bestowal of His merits are not inferior to the riches of His merits themselves. He is more ready to grant than we are to ask forgiveness.

The riches of Christ's pardoning mercy in the application of His merits may be made to appear from several considerations.

FIRST, *The means by which He is pleased to make us partakers of His saving merits illustrates the riches and freeness of His mercy.*

If He were not "rich in mercy" He would not bestow forgiveness gratuitously: He would require us to offer some equivalent for it, to make some sacrifice to obtain it, or to prove ourselves worthy of it: He would not grant free, unrestricted access to the blessings purchased by His blood, but would make the approach circuitous and difficult. How different is the manner in which He actually bestows forgiveness, and how illustrative of the riches of His mercy!

He has made faith in His blood the channel by which the virtue of His cross becomes ours—the means by which we receive forgiveness of sins; and He has made choice of this channel in order that salvation might appear to be a free gift;

that "boasting might be excluded" from the manner in which salvation is conferred as well as from the manner in which it was procured; and that the "abundance of grace" in which redemption originated and which appears in every step of its history, might excite us to gratitude and obedient love. Salvation "is of faith, that it might be by grace." GRACE paid our ransom, GRACE is the bearer of the good news, and GRACE knocks off our chains.

Christ, in His word and in His sacraments, makes us freely the offer of salvation; and all He requires *us* to do is to accept the offer and realize its benefits—to believe and live. To partake in the merits of Christ's passion and be happy for ever, it is only required of us that we believe in the efficacy of His passion,—that we believe that His death expiated our sins and procured in our favour a decree of acquittal,—that we regard His blood and righteousness as the sole, sufficient ground of our acceptance with God,—that we approve of God's gracious method of saving us freely by Christ, through faith,—that we consent to be saved on these terms—in this way,—that, abandoning every other refuge, we take refuge in Christ alone, with a loving trust in His power and grace. By this faith we are justified; and by this faith, "working by love," we are sanctified and saved.

A method of communicating the blessings of salvation freer than this, or more illustrative of the abundance of Christ's grace and the sincerity of His love to sinners, cannot be conceived to be possible; and therefore the bestowal of pardon and peace gratuitously, through faith alone, is a most convincing proof of the riches of His mercy.

SECONDLY, *the riches of His pardoning mercy are seen in the freeness and fulness of His offers of salvation through faith to all mankind.*

In the command to "preach repentance and remission of sins in His name in all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;" in the gracious words—"come unto me all ye that are wea-

ry and heavy laden and I will give you rest;" in the promise —" whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" in the touching and reiterated invitation—" The Spirit and the Bride say ' come' and let him that heareth say ' come' and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely;"—in these and innumerable other passages in His word Christ offers remission of sins and salvation to all mankind, without limitation, without qualification,—He invites every sinner, be he who he may, to come to Him by faith and accept forgiveness through the merits of His blood: and thus by the universality of His offers and invitations He manifests His loving purpose in tasting death for every man and exemplifies the abundance of His mercy.

As the sun shines and the rain descends equally " upon the just and the unjust," and as the air we breathe is free to all alike, so to all who have heard of the Gospel of Christ, whether they accept or reject it, the virtue of His atoning merits is freely offered. If any continue ' poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked,' it is not through the scantiness of the provision made for them in Christ: it is because they refuse and despise ' the unsearchable riches' offered to them.

But Christ has not only recorded *in His word* these gracious offers of salvation through faith. To prove the sincerity of His invitations and the reality of the riches of His mercy, He has ordained that public and perpetual proclamation of remission of sins through His merits should be made *by " the ministry of reconciliation."* He has commanded that assurances of the expiatory efficacy of His death, and offers of free pardon and salvation through faith in His name, and invitations to believe and live, and promises of the help of His spirit and grace, should be offered by His ministers to all mankind, from generation to generation. It is His will and decree that " this Gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all nations," so that its saving light should, sooner or later, " enlighten every man that cometh into the world," and " all the ends

of the earth" should hear of His salvation. But "how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" and, for the reasons contained in these words, Christ has appointed that in every age there should be preachers of "His unsearchable riches" and "stewards of His mysteries." He has ordained that fit persons should be publicly "called and sent," with authority transmitted from Himself, to testify to the riches of His mercy;—to plead with men, as His "ambassadors," and "pray them, in Christ's stead," as we now pray you, "to be reconciled to God;"—to "declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins;"—to "sign and seal the promises of forgiveness and of our adoption to be the sons of God" by "baptizing every one of us in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"—thereby, in effect, saying to us in Christ's name, "son,—daughter,—be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," "thy faith hath made thee whole;"—to enable us to realize the perpetual efficacy of Christ's blood to the washing away of our perpetually recurring sins, by means of "the communion of the body and blood of Christ" administered by them;—to act, in short, in every office of their ministry as preachers and heralds and stewards of His "unsearchable riches." The institution of the Christian ministry is thus a standing proof of the abundance and continuance of Christ's pardoning mercy. It was not His design to place any restriction on the proclamation of His Gospel, or to give it the character of an exclusive privilege conferred upon a particular class. In appointing chosen men to be Bishops and Pastors of His flock, and commanding them that "the things they had heard among many witnesses, the same they should commit to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also," it was simply His design to secure that the proclamation of His pardoning mercy should be certain, authorized, continuous, wide as the world, lasting as time itself: and thus the perpetuation and extension of "the ministry of reconciliation" proves the continu-

ance, and perpetuity, and abundance of Christ's mercy to sinners.

More especially is this seen *in the Ordination of Missionaries to the heathen.* In the services of this day we have an impressive exhibition of "the riches of Christ;"—the riches of His love in reconciling all nations "unto God, in one body, by the Cross,"—"the riches of the glory of this mystery that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of one body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel." It was Christ's command to His disciples to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,"—to "make disciples of all nations;" and, lo! in obedience to that command, more than eighteen centuries after it was issued, in a far distant land—in a place of which the very existence was till of late unknown to the world,—in obedience to that gracious, almighty word we are assembled here this day to take part in, or to witness, the Ordination of Missionaries to the Gentiles!* Does not this very fact prove the abundance, and endurance, and world encompassing extent of Christ's mercy?—the sincerity of His offers of pardon and peace to all mankind?—the strength of His desire that "all the ends of the earth should hear of His saving love?" But

THIRDLY, *The riches of Christ's pardoning mercy are proved, not only by the freeness of His offers of salvation, but more decisively still by the bestowal of His special grace to induce and enable us to accept those offers,*—by His gift of faith in His merits, and His actual application of His pardoning mercy to our souls by faith.

The sunlight of His mercy shines all around us and the riches of His merits are as free as the air we breathe, but naturally our eyes are blinded and every avenue of access to our hearts is closed and barred; and thus we continue in darkness, notwithstanding all He has done for us, until His special, sovereign grace opens our eyes and unlocks the door

* Of four persons admitted on this occasion to the order of Priesthood, three were Missionaries.

of our hearts, and constrains us to accept the forgiveness of salvation offered to us. If we have " tasted that the Lord is gracious," *we* can testify to the " unsearchable riches" of His pardoning, reconciling mercy, not only on the ground of what we have heard, but on the ground of what we ourselves have " seen and tasted and handled of the word of life." *In us* God has set forth the riches of His long suffering and the abundance of His pardoning love " for a pattern to them who shall hereafter believe in Him unto life everlasting." " God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened *us* together with Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." We are saved " not because we loved God, but because He loved us," and reconciled us to Himself, when we were enemies, by the death of His Son : and by a similar exercise of preventing grace Christ has induced us to avail ourselves of His love. It is by *His* mercy alone that we have been " made to differ" from others. *He* decreed that we should be born in a Christian land, of Christian parents ; and, before we were conscious even of existence, He gave us a name and a place in His Church, and gave us the assurance of our adoption to be sons of God, and brought us within the range of holy influences, and appointed parents and sponsors to train us up as His. And from that time forward, by His providence he watched over us; in His patience and long-suffering He bore with our provocations ; in all our wanderings His eye was upon us ; and the waters that gushed forth from the rock ever followed us. We did not seek Him but He sought us, and " He found us in a desert land, in the waste howling wilderness ;" and by the ministry of His Church He instructed us, and by His word He called us, and by His spirit He invisibly operated within us. He stirred up conscience to alarm us. He gave us grace to seek salvation, to cry for pardon and mercy, to claim the remission of sins procured by His death. He convinced us of our guilt and his righteousness, our de-

filements and the merits of His blood. "Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,"—in His infinite sorrows proving His infinite power to save, Christ crucified stood before us. "He showed us His hands and His feet." He showed us the compassion of His heart. He told us that "He had loved us," and in intention died for us, "before the foundation of the world:" and then, with "cords of love" He drew us, and with the fire of His grace He melted down our hostility, and with proofs of forgiveness He spake peace to our souls. "The love of God was shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto us," and our ways became "ways of pleasantness," and we were "filled with a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory;" and thus we were made rich for ever by "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

But consider also the completeness of the forgiveness he bestows and the continuance of His pardoning love. We are here this day as monuments of his mercy. Notwithstanding the greatness of our obligations, how deep has been our ingratitude! how hard and selfish our hearts! how many our "secret faults!" how inconsistent and rebellious our lives! Yet, He who died for us has not yet cast off. He loves us still: and His pardoning mercy, assured to us for ever by "one baptism for the remission of sins," is still our solace and rejoicing. As "the morning cloud and the early dew" disappear before the face of the sun, so, as often as "the dayspring from on high" arises to the view of our faith,—as often as "the Lord our righteousness" is made our plea, and remission of sins is claimed in virtue of the efficacy of His cross, our guilt disappears before the brightness of His face and peace is again restored.

But what tongue can declare, or what heart can conceive the riches of mercy which will greet our astonished eyes in heaven, when we see in the light of eternity how great our sins had been, from what an abyss of woe Christ's love delivered us, and "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the

saints?" "Unto Him that loved us," shall be our song, "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Oh! my brethren, if we have received grace to know and appreciate the unsearchable riches of Christ's pardoning mercy, and, still more, if to us "this grace has been given that we should preach among the Gentiles" these unsearchable riches, let us show that we esteem them as of more value to us than all the world besides. Let the theme of the Apostle's preaching be uppermost in our minds—nearest to our hearts! May it be the theme of our preaching and of your meditations for ever! and may we ever feel prompted to exclaim with ardent gratitude,—"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

In preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We preach

THIRDLY, THE RICHES OF HIS TRANSFORMING GRACE.

Christ's love in dying for our sins and His love in bestowing upon us forgiveness through faith in His blood constitute important portions, but not the whole, of His unsearchable riches. Both those manifestations of mercy, though glorious and impressive, are but means to an end; and the end they are intended to accomplish—the end and aim of the entire scheme of redemption, is the transformation of our souls into the image of Christ by means of His special, sanctifying grace.

Our reconciliation to God through the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, communicated by faith, removes out of the way every obstacle to the bestowal of spiritual blessings. It "breaks down the middle wall of partition," and introduces us into a state of communion with God. "Christ is made unto us" not only justification, but also sanctification,—the righteousness of God *in* us, as well as the righteousness of God *to* us. The riches of pardoning mercy displayed in our justification are but introductory to the riches of transform-

ing grace communicated to those who are justified. Christianity is not content with a mere change of relationship. It requires and effects an internal change of habit and heart. It is mainly and essentially a system of spiritual influences; and its chief mission in the world is to found a holy brotherhood of blood-bought, new born souls. It is not a new patch upon an old garment, or a new garment upon "the old man," but "*new love, new life,*"—the likeness of God imprinted upon man as the result of man's reconciliation to God. So long as we are in a state of condemnation we are shut out from participation in internal, spiritual blessings. God cannot consistently with justice bestow His grace upon rebels; but no sooner are we justified by our acceptance of pardon and the gift of righteousness for Christ's sake, introduced by faith into a state of "peace with God," and adopted into His family,—no sooner do the clouds which intercepted the light of God's countenance disappear than the warm sun of His grace begins to shine upon us; genial, benignant, holy influences descend upon us from above; the Holy Spirit is commissioned to renew our natures; the means of grace, before inefficacious,—(channels that were choked up by our unbelief,)—now communicate the grace they were meant to supply; the door of our hearts is thrown open, and Christ enters to dwell in them by His Spirit; the image of "the earthly Adam" is erased; the blessed image of "the Lord from heaven" is imprinted in its stead; and we are endowed, in proportion to our faith, with the riches of those spiritual graces which reside in Christ's eternal Godhead and the riches of those "gifts" which, "when He ascended up on high, He received for men."

The riches of grace manifested in Christ's own character, as depicted in scripture, exemplify the unsearchable riches of grace which He bestows; for, by faith our natures are united to His,—we are incorporated in His spiritual body; and every grace which was exhibited in His mediatorial person, whether derived from the union of the Divine nature with humani-

ty, or from the communication of the Spirit " without measure," was intended to be shared with us. The members partake in the glory of their head. " The oil of gladness," and goodness and purity which was " poured upon the head" of the mystical Aaron, " descends even to the skirts of his garments."

When " the word became flesh and dwelt among us," the perfections He exhibited were such as were adapted to the measure of human capacity. He did not shoot beyond all possibility of approach, but stooped to become an imitable pattern of what He wished us to be, and what He intended to be imparted to us and wrought in us by His Spirit. It was His will that " as He was so should we be in the world," "having the same mind," the same character: and hence when He commanded us to be " perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect," He exhibited the perfection He meant us to imitate, not in the blinding glare of " inaccessible light," but in the actions and words of humble humanity,—in meekness and gentleness,—in purity, and self-denial and devoutness,—in patience, and love, and tempered zeal; and thus He has encouraged us to endeavour to attain to " the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ." As the transforming grace which Christ communicates to believers flows from union with himself,—as the spring of every blessing conferred upon us is ' the inhabitation of Christ by the Spirit,' through whose work in the heart we are " made partakers of the divine nature," we may perceive the unspeakable abundance of the riches of His grace. No spiritual blessing is beyond the reach of those in whom Christ dwells. There is no completeness in the knowledge of Christ, no ripeness of spiritual apprehension, no strength of faith or warmth of love, no advancement in holiness, no nearness of access to God, no fulness of joy and peace, to which we may not attain through union with Christ by faith.

Means of grace have been instituted for the free, continual communication of these riches of grace—means by which,

on God's part, grace is conferred; but it is by faith, on our part, that we actually receive God's grace. As it is through faith that we receive remission of sins, so it is through faith that we receive from Christ the grace of His Spirit. All these riches of grace are ours already in the gift of God, because Christ is ours; and "if we believe that we receive them," they become ours in actual possession. If then Christ's transforming grace is so rich and abundant, and if it be communicated by the same free and open channel of faith by which we receive remission of sins, why my brethren, should any of us allow ourselves to "fall short of it?" When we are so rich in Christ, why should we be content to remain poor? It is but a small portion of Christ's transforming grace that any of us has received; and we may confidently assert that none of us has sounded all its depths, or experienced all, "the riches of its glory." Let us therefore, arise and claim our possessions. Let us prove that we are Christ's, by "leaving the things that are behind, and pressing forward to those that are before." Let us prove "the exceeding greatness of His power" and grace "to us-ward who believe."

The riches of the grace of Christ appear most conspicuously in contrast with the poverty of human systems of religion, and, particularly, with the poverty, and effeteness, and emptiness of heathenism. The religions of the heathen world leave men where they found them, or make them worse: but the Gospel of salvation byChrist through faith which we preach among the Gentiles makes "new creatures" of those who truly receive it. Multitudes of degraded, hardened sinners, have in every nation, been transformed by its influence into the image of God. Experience proves that God's word "returns not unto Him void," but sooner or later, "accomplishes that which He pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto He sent it. In this respect the religion of Christ still proves its divine origin by working miracles. It works spiritual miracles by the efficacy of grace. It causes ".the deaf heart" to

hear, the tongue of the wilfully dumb to utter God's praises. It expels the devil of hatred, gives strength to paralysed limbs to "fight the good fight of faith," cleanses the leprosy of corrupt affections, and raises the "dead in sins" to spiritual life. Is not the grace which effects such wonders well entitled—"The unsearchable riches of Christ?" And if we have had proof, in our own experience, and in the experience of those around us, of the reality and preciousness of these riches of transforming grace, should we not show ourselves more zealous than we are in making them known to others?—more zealous in preaching them, or helping forward every effort to preach them, "among the Gentiles?"

In conclusion:—

1. We have now seen the riches of *Christ's atoning merits*,—the riches of *His pardoning mercy*,—the riches of *His transforming grace*. We have seen that these unsearchable riches of Christ are the theme which Missionaries are to preach among the Gentiles. My brethren, is the theme of our preaching the object of your faith? the theme of your rejoicing? Have you enriched yourselves with the riches Christ has provided for you? or, on the contrary, are you starving—perishing amidst all this profusion of spiritual wealth? Be persuaded to seek these true riches. All other riches are unreal, unsatisfactory, unstable, and such as "perish in the using." Not the smallest portion of this world's wealth will accompany you into eternity. But the riches of Christ's merit and mercy and grace are "durable riches," and the more largely you avail yourselves of them the more welcome will you be, and the more blessed for ever.

2. Let us pray that all the ministers of Christ, and in particular they who are now about to be admitted to the full powers of "the ministry of reconciliation," may be enabled ever to consider the preaching of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" as their principal work, their greatest privilege, and the shortest road to success.

3. My brethren in the ministry and "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," does not this subject convey a lesson to *us*? If *we* have received "grace to preach among the Gentiles" Christ's unsearchable riches,—if to us who are "less than the least of all saints, this grace has been given," let us show our sense of the preciousness of these riches and the preciousness of the grace conferred upon us by "determining," with the Apostle, "not to know any thing" hereafter "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

C. K. S. Press, Madras—Reuben Twigg, Printer.